

The Decision Making Process

Introduction: Careful planning will help you make better decisions. Using a process may seem cumbersome at first, but after awhile it will seem natural. Using the following steps will help you become a good problem solver. Also see the Decision-Making Diagram on the next page. The process can be as informal as just thinking things through to putting it down on paper, complete with timelines and responsibilities.



The Decision Making Process

Step 1. Identify the problem. Problems are individual and unique to situations. You must clearly define the problem before you can proceed further.

- Whose problem is it? You can only solve your own problems.
- What can you do about this problem? Resources? Responsibilities?

Step 2. Identify and explore possible solutions.

- Gather information.
- Brainstorm and write down ideas. No negatives.
- Prioritize the solutions by apparent effectiveness and immediacy.
- Predict outcomes of alternatives.

Step 3. Pick your best solution according to your own perceived needs.

- Will it work now or very soon?
- Do you have the necessary materials, tools, skills and time?

Step 4. Implement the chosen solution. Plan, prepare, persist, produce.

- Set timelines, deadlines and time frames and start NOW!
- You must take responsibility for the implementation, meeting deadlines and monitoring outcomes.

Step 5. Monitor and evaluate outcomes. You are the best judge of your own actions.

- Monitor and observe specific checkpoints and timelines.
- This is an ongoing process; continue to monitor, evaluate and improve.

Step 6. If monitoring indicates a need for a major change, return to Step 2 and begin again.

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